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ABSTRACT

British higher education's response to the emerging adult education trend is examined in this monograph. Examined are the following: institutions of higher education and their contribution to the education of adults: educational access: mode of study: financial support: the need for greater adult participation: various observations on the state of adult education: and concluding remarks centering on further developments in adult education. Tables provided indicate substantial evidence that adult education is definitely on the upswing and remains so in the near future. Institutions examined have readjusted traditional admission requirements and modes of study to accommodate adult educational demand. Attention is given to the need for financial support to make possible an adult's continuing education. It is concluded that institutions planning policy around the 18-year-old incoming freshman may suffer in the future: future emphasis on adult education may be the saving factor for higher education institutions. References are provided along with a publications list from the European Cultural Foundation Institute of Education. (LC)

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THE ADULT STUDENT AND BRITISH HIGHER EDUCATION

ED183113

Rowland Wynne

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INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THE ADULT STUDENT AND BRITISH HIGHER EDUCATION

by Rowland Wynne

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FOREWORD

The Institute of Education has in the few years since its creation focused a great deal of its work on the emergence of new trends in higher education policies. The slow, but irresistible rapprochement between adult education and the higher education institutions is one of the most persistent long-term features of present developments in education. It is often less the result of policies than of a multitude of initiatives, pressures, appreciation of facts and attitudes, and expectations as to the evolution of student numbers and forthcoming financial resources.

This report on "The Adult Student and British Higher Education" written by Mr. Rowland Wynne during his stay as a visiting fellow at the Institute, provides a most interesting insight into the way in which British Higher Education has dealt with the increasing demand from adults. It throws light on many aspects of the evolution in Great Britain of which most experts outside Great Britain and probably also many British educationalists are ignorant and badly informed. Thus it admirably contributes to helping the Institute fulfil its task of rendering, by its research, service to the European education community.

Denis Kallen

CONTENTS

	Introduction	1
I -	Institutions of Higher Education and their Contribution to the Education of Adults	2
II -	Adult Undergraduates - Some Trends	9
III -	Access	17
IV -	Mode of Study	24
V -	Financial Support	27
VI -	The Need for Greater Adult Participation	29
VII -	Some Observations	32
VIII -	Concluding Remarks	43
IX -	Tables	49
	References	75

INTRODUCTION

The desirability of substantial increases in the number and proportion of adult students amongst the first degree student body of higher education institutions in the United Kingdom (and in particular the universities) is an issue to which increasing attention has been given in recent years. This certainly seems the case outside the academic community ; thus education spokesmen for political parties have made specific references to the need for such a development, the Trades Union Congress (which can broadly be described as the federation of Trades Unions in the United Kingdom) recently issued a policy document (1) outlining a number of steps which should be taken in order to achieve increased adult participation in undergraduate studies, and Government ministers with responsibility for Education have stated their belief in the efficacy of moves in this direction (particularly in the context of the Department of Education and Science (D.E.S.) discussion document on Higher Education in the 1990's (2), the major preoccupation of which is the likely impact of the falling birth rate on the demand for higher education). Indeed, the Secretary of State for Education recently expressed her view (3) that in compensating for the falling number of 18 year olds, the recruitment of adults to universities and colleges seemed a much more realistic possibility than the likelihood of a substantial increase in the participation rate of young people from school - the percentage of the 18 to 21 age group going into higher education. This view is presumably implicit in the Trades Union Congress document - the Congress' fundamental concern with the low participation rate of working class children so far as entering universities is concerned, is translated into a policy of increased opportunities for adults and particularly manual workers to gain access onto university courses.

At first glance, concern with this particular aspect of higher education may strike the outsider as curious in view of the new opportunities in

university education brought about for adults by the creation of the Open University a few years ago, a development which, it seems fair to say, literally transformed the plight of the prospective mature under-graduate (thus in 1976 the Open University's undergraduate population formed about a fifth of the total university undergraduate population in the United Kingdom). It is instructive, therefore, to look in greater detail at the opportunities that exist, the developments that have taken place and the barriers that remain in so far as the mature undergraduate in the United Kingdom is concerned, (postgraduate students will not be considered), and in this document an attempt will be made to provide such an analysis.

I - INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

By way of an introduction it is useful to review the spread of establishments for which the term institutions of higher education might apply and to indicate the involvement of such institutions in the education of adults other than in the provision of opportunities for first degree studies. In doing this it is necessary to make two observations relating to the statistics presented. Firstly, it is often the custom to define mature undergraduates as those aged 25 or over. This will be the practice adopted as far as possible here. However the limitations of the statistics available and the use by some institutions of other ages for defining the *boundary*, unavoidably results in some inconsistency in the presentation. Secondly, official statistics are presented separately for England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. These are not, in a number of respects, equivalent in terms of the nature of the information presented or indeed of the definitions used. Some information may therefore relate only to certain parts of the United Kingdom.

In categorising institutions of higher education the major subdivision

is created by the binary system, setting the universities apart from other colleges (4). The universities (excluding the Open University for the moment, there are forty five universities in the United Kingdom) superficially at least form a homogeneous group, they are largely supported by public monies - via the University Grants Committee (U.G.C.) - nevertheless they possess a significant degree of autonomy and have the right to award their own degrees. Their teaching rôle is well nigh exclusively concerned with higher education i.e. "*advanced*" courses (essentially courses beyond secondary level), more particularly first and higher degree work.

Homogeneity is not however a characteristic of the non university or so called further education sector. Indeed there is some difficulty in identifying precisely those colleges that can be categorised as institutions of higher education since those involved in "*advanced*" work also to a lesser or greater extent provide non-advanced courses. It is often the practice to limit the category to those colleges whose work is primarily in the advanced area and here a fairly well defined group emerges :
- the Polytechnics of England and Wales (under the responsibility of local authorities) and Ulster College - N.Ireland Polytechnic (financed by the Northern Ireland Education Office) and the Central Institutions of Scotland (financed by the Scottish Education Department, and, in the case of three colleges of agriculture, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland). Table 1 (5) indicates the dominance of advanced work at these institutions. A few small specialist colleges funded directly by the D.E.S. - the so called direct grant institutions - may also be included.

The polytechnics, central institutions and direct grant institutions do not account however for all advanced work. A significant proportion of this work is undertaken by the other category of further education college, referred to as "*Other Maintained and Assisted Major Establishments*" (England and Wales), "*Day Colleges*" (Scotland) or "*Institutions of Further Education*" (N.Ireland) which are the responsibility of local

education authorities (L.E.A.). However as a proportion of total enrolments, advanced work is a minority activity at these colleges (see Table 1). This group in fact represents a whole spectrum of colleges, a majority not undertaking any advanced work at all, the remainder having varying commitments with respect to such work.

For the sake of completeness a further group - the Evening Institutes or Centres - are included in Table 1. These normally involve the use of premises used during the day as schools and are largely concerned with L.E.A. non-vocational adult education activities (see p.6).

One further group of establishments which also lays outside the university sector must be noted. These are the colleges of education - institutions concerned with the training of teachers ; their work is wholly regarded as *advanced* but they have traditionally lain outside the further education sector. These colleges have in the last few years been subjected to drastic changes in view of the decline in the birth rate ; thus in England and Wales the number of teacher training places (including departments of education at some polytechnics) is being reduced from some 110,000 in the early seventies to about 47,000 in 1981 (6), in Scotland the student intake for the colleges of education has been reduced from about 7,000 in the early seventies to 2,450 in 1978-79 (7) while for Northern Ireland the equivalent intake has been reduced from 970 to 440 (8). Despite these reductions the ten colleges of education in Scotland and the three in Northern Ireland are, for the present at least, to remain in existence. However in England and Wales the large reduction has been coupled with a complete re-organisation of the institutions concerned so that of a total of about 160 separate institutions (including some polytechnics engaged in teacher training at the beginning of the seventies) only half that number will be engaged in this activity by the end of the decade. Many colleges are being closed, a few have been assimilated into neighbouring universities, while the rest have either amalgamated with polytechnics or formed what are often designated institutes or colleges of higher education. These

are institutions arising either from the merger of a college of education with neighbouring further education establishments, or the reorientation of a college (or colleges merged together) towards an educational programme diversified beyond the previous exclusive concern with prospective teachers. To all intent and purpose the colleges of education in England and Wales and the work for which they were responsible have been assimilated into the further education sector.

The fluidity of the present situation in which the new institutes and colleges of higher education are still developing their educational provision makes the task of identifying the institutions of higher education doubly difficult. Some idea of the pattern likely to develop in England and Wales has been presented in a background paper prepared by the D.E.S. (9) and Table 2 indicates the breakdown of advanced work in further education institutions in 1981 as predicted in that paper. Clearly there are perhaps a hundred institutions other than polytechnics which could be described as institutions of higher education on the basis of this projection.

Not all institutions engaged in advanced work necessarily involve themselves in first degree courses, and in many colleges such degree studies as are undertaken are confined to one area (for instance the Bachelor of Education degree in colleges of education). Indeed numerically speaking first degree work is concentrated to a significant extent in the polytechnics and central institutions. However since this document is concerned with the opportunities available for degree work rather than the characteristics of particular groups of institutions, no attempt will be made to confine the term "*institution of higher education*" to those colleges concerned primarily or exclusively with such work, rather it is hoped that the foregoing discussion will give some understanding as to the nature and diversity of the institutions involved.

What has been the involvement of institutions of higher education in the general education of adults ? In the field of adult education, universities

provide (and have provided for over a century) a distinct contribution in the form of "*extension*" or "*extra mural*" work. Within a given university, such activity is not diffused amongst the academic departments but concentrated in one unit - a department of extra mural studies or of adult education - though staff from throughout the university may contribute on a part-time basis (outside their university contract) to the teaching programme. These departments are classed as "*responsible*" bodies and accordingly receive a grant of up to 75% towards teaching costs from the D.E.S. for courses of "*liberal adult education*" (such grants are not however received by the extra mural departments of Scottish universities, though government assistance is provided in respect of administrative and organising costs). Substantial income is also provided from their own university's funds - and additional finance is received via local authorities grants and student fees. Several other universities not in receipt of D.E.S. grants support modest adult education programmes from their own resources, and in all some 34 out of a total of 45 universities (excluding the Open University) in the United Kingdom are engaged in extra mural activities.

The nature of the majority of the work of such departments can be classed as "*liberal*" or "*non-vocational*" adult education - usually involving evening classes run on a weekly basis and open to all. In this, the departments form one of the three major providers of such education in the United Kingdom - the other two being the L.E.A.'s and the Workers Educational Association (W.E.A.). Comprehensive statistics relating to non vocational courses provided by the L.E.A.'s in England and Wales are not collected annually by the D.E.S. but figures were published in the Russell Report on Adult Education (10) for 1968-69. The relevant statistics are however collected in Scotland and Northern Ireland and the figures for the four countries, for 1968-69 are presented in Table 3 (11). In 1975-76 the non vocational student enrolment at extra mural university classes for the United Kingdom as a whole was 198,098 (12).

Traditionally, the contribution of universities in this area has been

the provision of courses of "*the character and quality of university teaching*" (13). In doing this, the Russell Report (14) noted significant changes in the role undertaken over the last century from "*originally offering adult education with the idea of giving some taste of university teaching to what were then the two most deprived classes in the community, women and manual workers*" to a situation where in view of "*easier access to higher education*", they "*concentrated less upon the discharge of an obligation towards the education of the under privileged*" so that "*many universities now see their role as predominantly with those who have benefited from the greater accessibility of higher education*". It has been traditional for extra-mural departments not to be concerned with preparing students for examinations, (though this does not appear to have been the case in the earliest years), rather the emphasis has been on "*learning for its own sake*" - the so called Great Tradition ; indeed the view was sometimes expressed that the quest for qualifications in some way demeaned the more noble activity of being interested in learning "*as a means of understanding the great issues of life*". However, there has been a tendency in recent years for courses leading to a diploma or certificate to be developed by extra-mural departments.

As well as non-vocational courses, university extra-mural departments have also moved towards the development of professional and post-experience courses for specific professions, for instance in the field of industrial relations and social work (though other areas or departments within universities may carry out such work as well). Thus in 1975-76 the total provision made by university extra mural departments in the United Kingdom, including this vocational element, amounted to a student enrolment of 215,426 (15). The training of adult tutors and research in adult education are other areas in which the universities have made and are making a distinctive contribution to the field of adult education.

Reference to the award, by extra-mural departments, of certificates and diplomas following the successful completion of certain courses, and the consequent implicit, if not explicit "*vocational*" connotations on the

part of students if not the department concerned leads to the rather different contribution made by non-university institutions of higher education (excluding for the moment, colleges of education). As well as providing part of the non-vocational adult education programme of the L.E.A.'s to which reference has already been made, these institutions have made a significant contribution to the vocational needs of adults (in addition, of course to that of young people) through the provision of courses, on a basis (e.g. part-time evening classes) which best suits the employed person, and leading to a whole range of awards - professional, technical, commercial, craft, secondary school and higher level academic qualifications (including degrees, the area of concern of subsequent sections of this document). Table 4 (16) indicates the number of students enrolled on evening courses in various further education establishments in the United Kingdom (since non-vocational classes tend to take place in the evening, the statistics relating to "*all courses*" have a built in bias towards evening work compared with those relating to vocational courses or courses leading to a qualification). It is worth noting in passing that the level of evening work carried out at colleges largely concerned with advanced work (e.g. polytechnics) is proportionately far less than at other institutions. This feature forms part of what is seen by some as the phenomenon of "*academic drift*" whereby institutions in the further education sector aspire towards an educational status which matches that of universities (17). Such a move or "*drift*" entails the loss of the diversity of provision characteristic of further education. This is achieved, so it is claimed, by a concentration for instance on advanced or even degree level work at the expense of courses of a non-advanced nature, and by the development of full-time studies at the expense of part-time students including those, as noted in this instance who study in the evening.

Finally note should be made of the enrolment of adults at colleges of education. During the sixties, a period of rapid growth so far as the colleges were concerned, significant numbers of adults were admitted, indeed were actively encouraged to enrol. Table 5 indicates the trend so far as English and Welsh colleges of education are concerned (18).

II - ADULT UNDERGRADUATES - SOME TRENDS

The previous section dealt with areas in which institutions of higher education deal exclusively with adults (university extra-mural departments) or in which adults are present in significant proportions (vocational evening courses at local colleges). With two or three notable exceptions however, the participation of adults in degree work is on the whole marginal. Indeed, despite the significant contributions referred to in the last section, it is probably true that institutions of higher education and particularly universities tend in the public eye to be associated with the 18-21 year group i.e. those persons who enter into a three year period of study for a degree, or similar qualification, direct from school. And from the point of view of educational planning, the demographic trends and aspirations of this age group certainly dominate the scene, witness for instance the D.E.S.'s recent document on higher education in the 1990's referred to earlier. However, degree studies are not exclusively undertaken by this age group and the trends over the last few years indicate a steady increase in the number of adults attending institutions of higher education alongside the 18-21 year old students.

So far as universities are concerned, the growth in the number and proportion of undergraduate students aged 25 over on full-time and sandwich courses in the United Kingdom is shown in Table 6 (19). Both numerically and proportionately a steady growth can clearly be observed. It should be noted that the term "*undergraduate*" refers not only to those studying for a first degree (or equivalent diploma) but also to persons attending courses not leading to a qualification. Such students form a very small proportion of the total - some 1-2% - but it would appear that the proportion of adults on such courses is significant. In consequence the proportion of students aged 25 or over studying for a first degree is likely to be rather less than the percentages given in Table 6. Confirmation of this is obtained by comparing figures provided

by the Universities Central Council on Admissions (U.C.C.A.) for those students who have accepted university places on courses leading to a first degree or first diploma under the U.C.C.A. scheme, with the D.E.S. figures for entrants onto undergraduate courses which include those on courses not leading to a qualification (U.C.C.A. is the body which acts as a central clearing organisation for applications to universities in the United Kingdom, other than the Open University and in certain circumstances some of the Scottish universities). These are given in Table 7 (20) and it is clear that the U.C.C.A. figures (relating to first degrees and diplomas) are significantly lower than the undergraduate figures. The two sets are not strictly comparable. Thus U.C.C.A. do not process all admissions to United Kingdom universities ; however the vast majority of prospective students pass through their system - U.C.C.A. acceptances represent some 93 % of the total first degree and diploma admission (21). Secondly U.C.C.A.'s statistics relating to age distributions refer to September 30 of a given year while the D.E.S. figures refer to December 31 of that year so that the D.E.S. figures can be expected to provide higher proportions. The increase however is likely to be small ; comparisons for 1976 suggest the proportion would increase by some 3%. The two sets of figures are therefore broadly comparable, and it seems likely therefore that statistics referring to university undergraduates must be regarded as being too high in the context of first degree studies. Nevertheless the U.C.C.A. statistics confirm that adult participation in such studies at universities has been growing over recent years. The same trend is also to be seen in applications for university places and the relevant figures, derived from U.C.C.A. statistics, are presented in Table 8 (22) (note that applicants (or entrants) aged 25 or over do not represent, as a group, the exact equivalent of students aged 25 or over ; the latter group contains some students who at application or entry, were under 25 years of age).

Unfortunately comparable figures for further education institutions are available only for England and Wales. These statistics, relating to degrees of the Council for National Academic Awards (C.N.A.A.) - now

the main validating body in the further education sector - and degrees validated by individual universities are given in Table 9 (23). Here the numerical growth is faster but the proportion of adults, though about twice that obtaining at universities, does not display a clear trend, indeed seems to have gone through a trough in the sixties. The situation is in fact a rather complicated one in that the statistics refer to a period of great and significant changes in so far as degree work in the further education sector is concerned - a period when colleges moved away from preparing students for university degree examinations (primarily University of London external degrees, as will be noted later) towards courses planned by the staff themselves and validated by the C.N.A.A. This change over is illustrated by the separate university and C.N.A.A. columns in the table, indicating the very different participation rates of adults in the two cases, in particular the low proportion of 25 year olds and over on C.N.A.A. courses in the earlier years.

Figures providing the age distribution of part-time first degree students are not generally available. It is likely however that the older student, in employment, rather than the 18-21 year old, represents the predominant group here (the tradition for the qualified 18 year old, entering higher education straight from school, to do so on a full-time basis is a strong one) ; indeed the C.N.A.A. part-time degree courses are described as being designed mainly with the mature applicant in mind. This is confirmed by statistics relating to entrants onto C.N.A.A. degree courses. These, set out in Table 10 (24) indicate that about two thirds of the students concerned are aged 25 or over and accordingly total numbers can be regarded as providing an indication of trends. So far as universities are concerned the opportunities of part-time degree study are extremely limited and the low student populations (in absolute and relative terms) presented in Table 11 (25) are no doubt a reflection of this fact. The situation so far as the further education institutions are concerned is rather different as is indicated in Table 12 (26). Overall part-time

enrolments are significantly higher, represent a far greater percentage of the overall first degree population than is the case for universities and display a steady annual increase (though not as spectacular an increase as is the case for full-time and sandwich courses as the decreasing proportion of part-time students amongst the total first degree population indicates). The increase however reflects the trend in the part-time day population ; evening work appears to have stagnated, largely it would appear because of the relatively late and slow development of C.N.A.A. courses to replace those aimed at university degrees, in comparison with the same development in the full-time and sandwich area.

Statistics relating to the age distribution of student following B.Ed. courses at colleges of education are not generally made available through government publications other than for Northern Ireland. These are presented in Table 13 (27), and indicate an increasing proportion of adult students. (It should be noted that a change in course patterns occurred in 1972 so that figures in earlier years refer to students enrolled on all four years of the B.Ed. course while figures for later years refer only to the last two years).

In England and Wales the changes in the teacher training area referred to earlier have resulted in a situation whereby the vast majority of those on training courses (other than postgraduate training courses) will be undertaking degree (B.Ed.) studies. In a number of instances such students will for the first two years be following courses leading to the Diploma in Higher Education (Dip.H.E.). This is a two year qualification introduced recently in the United Kingdom, at the moment to be found exclusively in the non-university sector - the polytechnics and colleges of higher education - and validated by the C.N.A.A. or neighbouring universities. The diploma is broadly seen as equivalent to the first two years of a degree course ; the same entrance qualifications obtain, and students may stay on (or transfer, where acceptable to another institution) for a further year to complete the appropriate degree (for instance the B.Ed.) or defer such a move until later in their career.

In the context of adult students it is therefore interesting to note that recent statistics for 21 colleges who had submitted returns for 1977 (out of a total of 44 institutions offering Dip.H.E. courses) indicated that 53% of the total student intake of 956 were aged 21 or over (28).

The general picture then, would appear to suggest that the adult population engaged in first degree studies is a somewhat marginal one, though growing in significance. This however is to ignore those institutions which must be regarded as exceptions. These represent situations where adults are the dominant, if not the exclusive, clientele. There are essentially three, involving one of the oldest and the youngest university in the United Kingdom - London and the Open University. London's contribution is two-fold. Firstly one of its colleges - Birkbeck - is, at first degree level, geared to the teaching of adults. The vast majority of students are part-timers who are "*engaged in earning their livelihood during the day time*" (29), and those who are studying full-time are usually students who have opted in their last year to give up employment and concentrate exclusively on their degree studies. Teaching at the College, therefore, takes place essentially in the evening. Table 14 (30) presents figures relating to the student population over the last few years as well as the proportion who are studying part-time.

The University of London also, through its external degree structure, allows individuals to register as students and sit its degree examinations. The University in this context acts simply as an examination body and not as a teaching body (though an advisory service is available). However, the individual has recourse to private institutions offering correspondence tuition and some extra mural departments also provide tutorial help. Table 15 (31) indicates the growth in the total registration for such students. (It is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of these are adults in full-time occupation). It is appropriate at this juncture to note that these figures represent only a fraction (and until recently a minority) of the total number of persons registered as external students of the University of London. The remainder are full- or part-time students at non-university institutions where they are prepared for the external

degree. (Many universities in the United Kingdom in fact went through a period, before they were granted university status and the right to award their own degrees, when they prepared for University of London examinations). Such students are included in Tables 9 and 12 under the heading "*leading to university degree*". The University of London, however, has decided to discontinue the registration of full-time students, so that the preparation of such students for London external degrees at non-university institutions of higher education is being phased out as is apparent from the relevant figures in Table 9, leaving only the private student and, for the time being, the part-time student.

The University of London's practice of offering an opportunity for external students to sit its degree examinations has been in existence for well over a century. The third "*exception*" namely the Open University, represents the last university to be created in the United Kingdom (the first students commenced their studies in 1971). Created exclusively for adults (all students other than certain exceptional cases must be 21 or over, though a limited "*experiment*" with 18 year olds has taken place), it is designed essentially for part-time, home based, study using correspondence material and TV and radio broadcasts (with optional attendance for tutorials at local "*study centres*" and compulsory one week residential attendance at a summer school). The student enrolment has risen to 51,035 students in 1976 (32), and long term plans are based on a "*steady state*" of some 75,000 students based on an annual intake of some 25,000 applicants (33).

The overall picture then as presented above is that of a clear cut trend over recent years whereby participation in first degree studies on the part of adults has been steadily increasing. Before however looking in greater detail at some of the factors which affect the involvement of adults in such studies it is perhaps useful to gain some idea of the characteristics of this particular section of the undergraduate population. Unfortunately, the information available is rather sparse and patchy so that of necessity the following observations provide only a partial picture.

So far as the distribution of students by sex is concerned the most significant general trend over the last few years has been the increase in the proportion of women studying for a first degree. Thus so far as full-time undergraduates at United Kingdom universities are concerned

the percentage who are female has increased from 28% in 1965-66 to 35% in 1975-76 (34). This trend is also to be seen in the case of mature undergraduates ; however the overall level is somewhat lower ; in 1975-76 only 32 % of students aged 25 or over were female (35). Adult women clearly do not participate in first degree studies at universities to the extent that their younger colleagues do.

Data relating to full-time and sandwich first degree studies at further education institutions of higher education in England and Wales indicate the same pattern of lower participation on the part of mature women. Another factor to be noted so far as this sector is concerned, is that the proportion of women is lower than for universities ; for 1975-76 the relevant figure for students aged 25 or over is 26% (36). This refers to students on courses leading to both university and C.N.A.A. first degrees. In fact if these two groups are separated, a far higher proportion of women are to be found on the university degree courses presumably reflecting the strength of traditionally male orientated subject areas (engineering and science) within the C.N.A.A. first degree course offering. Interestingly the proportion of women on part-time first degree courses in further education is even less, being only 22% in 1975-76 (37).

Turning to the institutions labelled above as exceptions, one notes a significantly higher participation rate for women. At Birkbeck, in the 1974-75 session, 43% of first degree students were women (38), while in 1976 the relevant figure for the Open University was 39% (39). In both institutions, the proportion of women students has, as elsewhere, steadily increased over recent years.

An examination of such data as is available concerning the age distribution of mature students indicates that the majority concerned are in their 20's and 30's. Thus of those persons aged 25 or over who accepted a university place in the United Kingdom via the U.C.C.A. system in 1976 only 7% were aged 40 or over (40). Of the students on first degree courses at Birkbeck in 1974-75 those aged 43 or over formed only 9% of the total

population (41). And an examination a few years ago of those students studying privately for a London external first degree in Economics revealed that only a quarter were over 35 years of age (42). The Open University shows the same trend but to a lesser extent. In 1976 the proportion of applicants aged 41 or over was 20% (43), while a third of the student body in that year belonged to that age group (44) (an Open University student is not however required to complete his studies in a set period of time so that an "*accumulation*" of students in the older age group will tend to occur).

The subject choices that are made by mature candidates seem to lean towards the arts and social sciences. U.C.C.A. statistics for United Kingdom university candidates in 1976 indicate that while 7.3% and 6.8% of those applying for places on social, administrative/business studies and arts courses respectively were aged 25 or over only 2.8% of those applying for science courses were in that age group (45). Table 16 (46) indicates the distribution of mature applicants amongst the primary subject groups. Tables 17 (47) and 18 (48) provide the equivalent picture for the distribution of applicants amongst the Open University's five Foundation Courses (courses followed by students in their first year) and of students registered "*privately*" for the various first degrees of the University of London's external system respectively. In London's case the science degrees (other than economics) are being discontinued because of the severe drop in student registration (49). Of equal interest is the high proportion of persons enrolled on the external law degree of the University of London (such a degree is not available at the Open University).

A recent study of students in polytechnics indicates a somewhat different distribution of those aged 25 or over amongst the major discipline areas and this is indicated in Table 19 (50). Here engineeering and technology appear as the most popular subject areas, while social, administrative and business studies are the most favoured areas amongst the student body as a whole. This high proportion no doubt reflects the prevalence

of engineering and technological subjects amongst further education first degree courses. It may also be linked to another finding of the study namely the high proportion of non-degree mature students on vocational and professional courses, echoing the popularity of the University of London's law degree referred to earlier.

Finally what of the students' social background ? Here the information available is more limited, but attention can be drawn to two studies. The first, concerned with polytechnics and referred to above (51), indicates that mature first degree polytechnic students are drawn from the same social class as other students - thus only a quarter of the group come from working class backgrounds (as defined by the father's occupation). This incidentally is broadly the situation that pertains so far as university students are concerned. Another study (52) concerned with Open University students suggests a somewhat different pattern. An examination of the occupational status of the Open University's 1971 student intake indicated that only some 5% belonged to working class occupations. However if the students were classified according to their father's occupation then the relevant figure rose to 52% - not far below the corresponding percentage within the national distribution of occupation applicable to the age group concerned. It would therefore appear that Open University students have "*experienced upward social and occupational mobility before they commenced their studies with the University*".

III - ACCESS

Having noted some general trends it is now appropriate to look in rather greater detail at the extent to which adults are treated separately and/or sympathetically, or are expected to follow, what is for many institutions the norm as laid down for the 18-21 year olds. To begin with, what of the routes by which a student gains access onto a first

degree course ? To enter such a course the individual must "*qualify*" i.e. satisfy certain entrance requirements. The norm here, is the possession of passes in two subjects at the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.), Advanced (A) level - the qualifications sought by pupils at schools in order to gain access directly to a higher education institution. A number of passes are also usually required at the G.C.E. Ordinary (O) level - these relate to examinations usually taken at school at an earlier stage (about 16 years of age) prior to moving onto G.C.E. A level work. Other "*equivalent*" qualifications are generally accepted, usually of a more vocational orientation obtained through the further education system at local colleges. The two 'A' level qualification (or its equivalent) is a necessary but not sufficient condition since high application for places may ensure that higher grades and/or three passes may be required for a given course. In this context then, it is clearly possible to be more or less encouraging towards adult students and this would indeed appear to be the case. Table 20 (54) indicates the wide variations in the proportional enrolment of 25 year olds and over as full-time or sandwich undergraduates in U.K. universities, ranging from 3% at St. Andrews, Lancaster and Oxford in 1976-77 to 22% in that year at Essex. It is interesting to note that the growth in the proportion of such students in the period 1973 to 1976 is not evenly spread amongst the universities but is particularly marked at the so called "*new universities*" - those established in the sixties - e.g. Coleraine, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex and York, indicating a particularly encouraging approach on the part of these institutions.

Scrutiny of university entrance requirements as applied to mature students also forms an interesting exercise in terms of the varying degrees of encouragement implicit in the statements made, varying from "*exceptional candidates may be...*" to "*the university is pleased to receive applications...*" or "*it is the university's policy to encourage and welcome applications...*".

Comparable data for the non university sector would not appear to be generally available. However a recent survey of staff and students at

polytechnics in England and Wales (56) indicates significant variations between the institutions concerned. Thus amongst Bristol Polytechnic's degree student population, only 1% were aged 25 or over in 1972. In the same year 26% of the degree student population at North East London Polytechnic were aged 25 or over. It should be noted that variations in intake can reflect not only the institution's attitude towards mature students, but also the availability or otherwise of courses of interest to such students ; see for instance the comments in the previous section on course choice.

More significant, perhaps, is the operation of mature age regulations for entry onto degree courses. These "*regulations*", which exist for almost all degree awarding bodies, essentially allow students above a certain age (usually in the range of 21-21) to enter onto a degree course without being qualified, i.e. the general entrance requirement is relaxed. In these situations, a variety of methods are used to assess whether a person is "*adjudged to be capable of pursuing successfully a course of this kind*", involving interviews, examination of written work, assessment of previous experiences (academic and employment) and so on. In some instances e.g. the J.M.B. group of universities (Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham), formal arrangements involving a special exam or tests are used to assess mature applicants. Obviously there is a significant scope here for applying a sympathetic or non-sympathetic approach towards adults. There do not appear to be figures generally available to indicate the number of students who enter degree courses on this basis. However, in 1977 at Cardiff, 62, (i.e. some 5% of the total entry for first degree courses) of the 197 students aged 23 or over had come in via this route (57), and Dr. E. KERR, Chief Officer of the C.N.A.A. was recently quoted as stating that 4% of students currently joining C.N.A.A. courses were without formal entrance qualifications (58). It is particularly interesting to note that the survey of Dip.H.E. student intake referred to in the previous section, showed that 34% of the students were over 21 and did not possess the "*qualifying*" two 'A' levels (59). There is some evidence that this route is being used increasingly.

Thus the Secretary of the University of London noted that while only two persons entered the University in 1971 on the basis of the "*mature regulation*", 76 had done so in 1975 (60).

The above comments on the need to satisfy entry requirements apply equally to Birkbeck College and the London external degree system, and in both cases London's mature age regulations obtain. In Birkbeck's case the college may also enrol an unqualified mature student provisionally for the first year, success at the end of that year virtually guaranteeing that the person concerned will be allowed to continue and enter for a London degree. By this means and by sponsoring others who can produce evidence of "*successful study*" Birkbeck has in recent years opened its doors more and more to the unqualified adult, in 1977 22% of new entrants came in via this route (61).

The Open University has set aside the need to satisfy certain academic entrance requirements ; no formal qualifications are required for entry. Nevertheless students have to be "*selected*" in that the number of applications has far exceeded the number of places available in each year. Accordingly a "*first come first served*" policy has been adopted from the outset, within which quotas are set to achieve the desired distribution with respect to courses, regional populations and student occupations. Table 21 (62) indicates the applications, and places available at the University over its first years of existence.

Implicit in most of the mature regulations referred to above is the perceived need for evidence of ability to pursue a degree course successfully. Turned on its head, the corollary to this need is the student's own wish to know the degree of preparation which he should undertake before entering on such a commitment. One preparation, of course, is that of following the route taken by the conventional school pupil aspiring to enter a degree course i.e. follow G.C.E. 'O' and 'A' level courses, and this is possible at local technical and further education colleges, as has already been noted. However, it is argued that such courses, designed as they are for school

pupils, are not necessarily relevant nor indeed suitable for adults. Thus the adult's experience is vastly greater and richer than that of the school pupil, while the process of *"returning to learning"* involves the development of skills with which the adult learner at the outset may not be equipped. This, of course, strengthens the justification for the use of *"mature"* as opposed to *"normal"* entry regulations for adults. However, the vagueness of most mature age regulations (arising naturally out of the bewildering variety of relevant experiences which an adult can bring to bear in such a situation) emphazises the need for the aspiring adult student to have access to adequate information and opportunities for discussions with appropriate personnel, as well as relevant and meaningful courses of action at his or her disposal as a follow-up. This is an area where support, more often than not, is difficult to find. Conventional higher education institutions do not see this as being to any extent their task since, for the majority of applicants (the 18 year olds), the schools are seens as the relevant agents with a carefully structured programme of development over many years and clearly defined goals in terms of the requisite number of G.C.E. 'O' and 'A' level passes. The mature student on the other hand, is usually bereft of such institutional support. For the adult in particular there is then a strong case for putting emphasis on the needs of the individual as much as on the needs of institutions to be able to gauge his or her *"ability to pursue a course successfully"*.

Such an emphasis has not, of course, been totally absent in the past. Those who are members of extra-mural (or W.E.A.) classes have always had recourse to the advice and encouragement of their tutors in this respect, and indeed some universities refer such students to their extra-mural departments for guidance prior to any application. Again reference has already been made to the advisory service of London's external degree system. The advent of the Open University however, with its open access policy, has heightened the needs in this area, and the University from the beginning has operated an applicant advisory service which, by means of correspondence material and face to face meetings with counselling staff, endeavours to provide information and guidance to prospective students.

Of greater significance perhaps, not only from the point of view of access to degree courses, but to learning opportunities generally, has been the growing interest in the development of educational advisory services for adults. Such a service has been in existence since 1967 in Belfast, providing vocational and educational guidance for all comers, but it is only recently that a number of similar initiatives have taken place elsewhere. One significant venture is that of the Sheffield Working Group on Mature Entry to Education, a group composed of a number of relevant agencies in the Sheffield area, including three higher education institutions - Sheffield University (extra-mural department), the Open University (Yorkshire Region) and Sheffield Polytechnic. Here the primary concern is that of promoting easier access to adult education opportunities, and, to this end, a research project has been set up to investigate ways in which a local education advisory service for adults could be operated (63). Elsewhere embryonic advisory services have in fact been set up, at Cardiff, Lancaster, and Huntingdon for instance (64), the Cardiff scheme being perhaps the most ambitious in that the aim is to set up a network covering the whole of Wales, involving local contact persons and access to computer and viewdata resources for information storage and retrieval.

The ability to prepare oneself adequately prior to commencing a degree course is concomitant to the availability of information and advice. Reference has already been made to school courses (G.C.E. 'O' and 'A' level courses) and their perceived unsuitability in many situations. The more academically orientated courses run by adult education agencies (and in particular university extra-mural departments) have traditionally been regarded as a proving ground (though this is not the objective of such courses). Birkbeck runs one year preparatory courses, each linked to one of the degree courses available at the college (indeed success at the end of year exam is of particular value, when a student applies for entry via the mature student regulations) and these amongst other things give a foretaste of sustained evening study. And more recently the Open University, by virtue of its open access policy, recognised that the first

courses in which new students would embark - the Foundation Courses - had, of necessity, to involve a significant amount of preparation in orientating students towards degree studies. Even so the relevance of "*preparatory studies*", prior to entry into the Open University has been recognised since the earliest days and this has given considerable impetus to the proliferation of such courses, both at a local level (colleges and adult education agencies) and at United Kingdom level (the National Extension College (correspondence work) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (television and radio)), specifically designed for adults in the "*returning to learning*" or "*acquisition of study skills*" area.

A similar development, though on a more formal basis, is embodied in the recent formation of an Open College Federation in North West England (65). The five colleges involved, all local further education or adult colleges, have developed a series of courses or units specifically for adults to follow on a part-time basis. The successful completion of the requisite number of units allows the students concerned to apply for a place at one of the local higher education institutions - Lancaster University, Preston Polytechnic or one of the four higher education colleges whose degree courses are validated by Lancaster.

Mention should also be made of the work of long term adult residential colleges in preparing students for degree studies. At one such college, - Coleg Harlech -students after two years of residence can gain a University of Wales validated Diploma which is recognised by that University for "*qualification*" purposes. It is interesting to note that another such college - Hillcroft - now runs a course which qualifies for a C.N.A.A. award broadly equivalent to the Dip.H.E.

IV - MODE OF STUDY

Having given some consideration to the issues relating specifically to adult access onto degree courses, it is now appropriate to turn to those factors which help or hinder the mature student during the course of his or her studies. The following comments relate primarily to the formal and administrative arrangements rather than the content of the courses themselves or the study problems that adult students, in particular, are likely to be subjected to.

Perhaps one of the most crucial factors, nowadays, in terms of a decision to undertake degree studies, is whether a person can continue with his or her job or not, whilst studying. It is certainly significant that the three institutions noted above as exceptions, are essentially concerned with part-time, not full-time studies. Study at the Open University and Birkbeck College is arranged, so far as possible, to dovetail with hours of work, the Open University through the use of home based teaching methods and minimal requirements for attendance at educational establishments, Birkbeck by arranging its teaching programme to take place in the evening. And the individual registered externally with the University of London studying in isolation or using the services of a correspondence college, is clearly free to do so in conjunction with continued employment.

At other institutions however, part-time degree study, particularly on an evening basis, is the exception and not the rule. This is certainly the case for universities where the number following courses leading to degree qualification is very small (see Table 11). Unique in this area has been the part-time evening psychology degree at Hull University, unique in that it is designed specifically for mature students and is the product of co-operative action between the University's psychology and extra-mural departments (66). A similar development is to come into operation in Kent in the 1978-79 session ; there a part-time evening degree in modern languages is planned, again involving the co-operation of the relevant

academic departments and the University's extra mural department. So far as the non university sector is concerned, reference has already been made to the greater proportional strength of part-time degree courses (see Table 12). The proportion of such courses, validated by the C.N.A.A., continues to increase, thus in 1976 they formed 15.1% of all validated courses, compared with 12.5% in 1975 (67). Additionally, the C.N.A.A. is planning to alter its regulations to allow students on certain courses to follow a combination of part-time and full-time study (68). However as has been noted, part-time evening courses seem to have received low priority in the degree course development work carried out in the further education sector via the C.N.A.A., despite the tradition of evening study at the institutions concerned.

If study is to be pursued part-time, then clearly the facilities must be available locally. Whilst the Open University has tackled this constraint by the use of distance teaching methods, the student who wishes to pursue his/her studies at a "*conventional institution*" must seek one in his/her own locality. Interestingly enough this seems to be a factor even in the context of full-time studies as the following examples from S.E.Wales indicate. At Gwent College of Higher Education, all the mature student intake (23 years of age or over) onto Dip.H.E. courses in the last two years have been from the local area (local students are defined here as those who have not moved their homes in order to pursue their studies) (69). At University College, Cardiff, the overall situation is different - 39% of the total 1977 mature student intake (23 years of age or over) of 197 persons were from the local area (defined as above). However while only 26% of the male intake (140 students) were local, the corresponding percentage for the female intake (57 students) was 70% indicating that opportunities for women in particular are dependent on ease of availability in a geographical sense (70). It is to be noted here that the ease of availability inherent in a home based study system has been advanced as a factor accounting for the fact that the ratio of female to male applicants for places at the Open University is higher than for mature students at conventional universities.

A second factor of particular relevance to adults is that of flexibility in so far as the programme of study is concerned. Though registration lapses after a certain number of years for the University of London (External Degree) and Birkbeck student, it is normally possible to re-register. And at the Open University no maximum length of time by which a student must have completed his or her degree is stipulated ; by virtue of its modular structure, the University allows students to accumulate credits at a rate (up to a maximum number in a given year) which they themselves determine, allowing the possibility of "*dropping out*" for a period when external circumstances dictate this. The University of London course unit structure which is followed by Birkbeck allows its students to progress in a similar fashion. Such flexibility is rare in other institutions, not only because the full-time commitment of students straight from school tends to militate against such an approach, but because the three year degree course is more often than not still seen as a coherent whole, not something that can be subdivided and spread over variable periods of time.

Linked to this "*temporal flexibility*" is a "*spatial flexibility*" whereby individuals may transfer from one institution to another, possibly after a break away from study, full recognition being given by the receiving institution of the studies successfully completed at the other institution. Again because of the perceived coherence of a degree course such inter-institutional movement is rare in the United Kingdom but it allows the person concerned to participate in a variety of learning experiences - in terms of modes of study, and the vastly increased options available when a number of institutions are involved - as well as allowing the student to move (for employment reasons, say) from one part of the country to the other without forfeiting any successful studies accomplished before the move (students of both London (external) and the Open University, by virtue of the home based systems involved, are, of course, not faced with this latter problem). Such considerations would appear to be particularly relevant to adult students.

Spatial flexibility, as outlined above essentially implies the idea of transfer i.e. a system of accumulation of studies, completed at different institutions, leading to the award of a degree. This accumulation is implicit in the C.N.A.A.'s part-time degree structure. Some of its degree schemes in this area appear restrictive in terms of entry, in that levels of study higher than the two 'A' level norm are required. However the length of time involved in studying is shorter than for a degree course with lower entry requirements. The Open University has followed the same path from the beginning by implementing an exemption policy whereby students already possessing higher education qualifications (broadly those beyond the two 'A' level norm) are exempted from some of the credits required for the award of a degree. Courses for non graduate serving teachers (to be found at some higher education institutions) allowing them to "*top up*" their teacher's certificate and obtain a B.Ed. are in the same mould. Movement of students from one institution to another, ultimately, however, requires a system of mutual recognition of courses on the part of all the institutions concerned. Steps have been taken recently in this direction through a series of bilateral transfer arrangements reached between a number of universities, colleges of higher education and the C.N.A.A., individually on the one hand and the Open University on the other. And indeed the increased momentum which this development has gained, has now resulted in the Government's initiation of a study into the feasibility of a national credit transfer scheme.

V - FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Implicit in the reference, at the beginning of the last section, to the significance of whether the studies undertaken by an individual allow him or her to continue in employment, is the question of financial support required to embark on these studies. Clearly the adult who embarks on full-time study at an institution of higher education faces a particularly

difficult decision when it involves having to give up employment and the accompanying earnings. The availability of grants may therefore well be critical.

In the United Kingdom, all full time students are eligible for a statutory award if they have been accepted by a college or university for a course of study leading to a degree. These grants cover the fees and are also meant to meet living costs (less the parental contributions expected, depending on parent income). Two observations need to be made with respect to the adult student. Firstly, though the value of the grant increases according to the age of the recipient, the total sum recieved is significantly lower than that which a mature person might expect to earn. Secondly, if a person has already followed a course in higher education (not necessarily a degree course) then he or she is not eligible for a statutory award for the second course of study. In such situations the local authority (which in most instances provides the awards) may be prepared to offer support in the form of a "*discretionary*" grant but in the increasingly adverse economic situation of recent years, this has become an unlikely possibility. The recent large increase in undergraduate fees (1974/75 - £70, 1977/78 - £500) clearly worsens the situation. Other problems with financial implications, e.g. the possibility of having to move home or maintain two homes, clearly indicate that the word "*sacrifice*" is in no way misplaced so far as the full time mature student is concerned.

The part-time student is not entitled to a statutory award and thus is dependent on the discretionary grant that the local authority may be prepared to offer. The amount of financial support, therefore, varies from one part of the country to the other depending on the attitude of each authority. The part-time student, of course, is not generally faced with the choice between giving up his or her employment or not embarking on a degree course. However, there may still be consequences which have an effect on the employment situation. Thus a part-time course may involve day not evening studies, so that leave of absence (possibly unpaid) will

be required. Even with the Open University difficulties can arise for the student in arranging his or her absence for summer school and of course shift workers may be unable to attend many of the evening tutorial sessions.

VI - THE NEED FOR GREATER ADULT PARTICIPATION

The introductory section drew attention to the increasing interest being shown in the possibility of substantially increasing the proportion of mature students amongst the first degree student body in the United Kingdom. This interest however reflects not one but several aims on the part of the advocates concerned, indeed different persons may see the goal of significantly increased adult participation as achieving quite different ends. Not surprisingly the right of the individual adult to obtain access to higher education as an act of social justice (access which for many reasons might well have been previously denied), figures prominently. This objective is often linked to another aspect of social justice namely that an increase in adult participation in higher education provides a means of achieving a more equitable participation on the part of those with working class backgrounds than seems possible on the basis of the direct route from school to higher education institution. Coupled with such arguments concerning the needs of the individual are those linked to the needs of society as a whole. The great variety of talent and potential which remains untapped amongst the adult population is seen as a wastage which society can ill afford and which could be partially remedied by increased adult access opportunities.

Other arguments focus more closely on institutions and in particular (as was noted in the Introduction) on the universities. Thus on the one hand mature students are seen as "*leavening*" the university community in terms of their motivation, experience, greater stability and maturity ; their contribution to the learning process, in tutorials and so on, is welcomed,

and the contrast is made with the perceived lack of interest or motivation of many 18 year olds straight from school. On the other hand universities are seen as having done too little "*outside their walls*" in the community in which they are located and a substantially increased participation by adults is seen as one part of a strategy designed to develop a commitment on the part of the university to the surrounding region, providing a service for the underprivileged and so on.

The need to increase the proportion of mature undergraduates, is also voiced in the context of the full utilisation of higher education facilities. Thus the slackening in demand for entry into higher education on the part of qualified school leavers in the early seventies, meant that institutions of higher education were operating below capacity - there were empty places, not filled because of the lack of qualified candidates. Such under-use, it was argued, could be reduced by encouraging unqualified adults to enter. This concern with under utilisation and the possible solution posed by an increased mature student population has now come to the fore with the debate concerning the projected reduction in the 18 year old entry into higher education in the 1990's (71) to which reference has been made in the Introduction. Linked with this, it could be argued, is a continuing interest, on the part of policy-makers, in more effective ways of providing higher education. Thus the present Secretary of State, when she held the same post in the 1965-70 Labour administration, suggested to universities ways in which the cost per head of university education could be reduced (72). It is perhaps not without significance that amongst these were i) greater use of part-time and correspondence courses, ii) the possibility of a work period between school and university, iii) an emphasis on home based students and iv) the possibility of shorter courses ; all strategies which to a greater or lesser extent fit more closely to the pattern of usage associated with, or more desirable for, mature students.

It is pertinent to ask what role the Open University has played in these

arguments, since its creation may be regarded as resulting in a "*quantum jump*" in terms of opportunities for degree studies on the part of adults in the seventies. It seems reasonable to suggest that the University has either directly or indirectly acted as a catalyst by showing, that a significant demand existed (and no doubt creating a demand by its very existence), that adults in large numbers could pursue degree studies successfully and that the use of normal entry qualifications is not a necessary pre-requisite for this. Its success, in terms of demand has also highlighted its own limitations - it does not offer the specialist degrees prevalent in particular in the conventional universities, and its techniques - based on independent study - may well provide a barrier against those who are least advantaged in terms of their educational background, and to whom the traditional "*face-to-face*" system may be better suited. In a sense then events have come a full circle - the creation of the Open University reflected the view that only by setting up a completely new institution as opposed to the utilisation of existing institutions could the needs of adults be properly met. Yet its existence has focussed attention back with renewed vigour on the existing institutions and the roles they could play. In two countries recently the decision has been taken to set up an "*Open University*" (British Columbia, Canada (73) and the Netherlands (74)), in situations which suggest that existing institutions were not considered adequate for the task in hand. It will be interesting to see whether the above experience will be repeated there.

Whilst the examples listed above indicate that a variety of arguments and motives lay behind the desire for increased adult participation in first degree studies, one has to note that the seventies have seen a considerable quickening of interest in the education of adults generally. Thus international organisations have developed and focussed attention on such concepts and strategies as "*éducation permanente*", lifelong education, recurrent education and continuing education, whilst the United Kingdom has seen the publication of the Russell Report on Adult Education (75) and more recently the Open University Report on Continuing Education (76).

Such developments must surely be seen as a backcloth to any particular aspect of the education of adults such as the one under consideration here.

VII - SOME OBSERVATIONS

Thus far we have been concerned with attempting to provide a picture of the participation of adults in first degree studies, concentrating on certain structural aspects - access, modes of study, financial support - in so far as their influence on this participation is concerned. What general observations can be made ?

First of all there is the trend in conventional institutions (and of course magnified by the advent of the Open University) of increasing adult enrolment on first degree courses. This would appear to challenge the traditional assumption that a pool of ability exists amongst adults, which will diminish as opportunities for 18 year olds are expanded. Rather it would appear, as stated recently that :

> *"as more people are provided for at 18, those who did not get or take the opportunity then become aware of what they are missing. An increasing proportion of their acquaintance get degrees ; increasing demands are made by employers for formal qualifications ; so increasing numbers of people already at work begin to contemplate higher education"* (77).

In noting the trend it is appropriate to point out that the totals and proportions of mature students presented earlier, may be rather inflated by the presence of a significant minority of overseas students, amongst whom there is a relatively high proportion of adults. Evidence for this is indicated by figures for acceptance onto first degree and diploma courses at U.K. universities through the U.C.C.A. scheme and for entrants onto C.N.A.A. courses in England and Wales, shown in Tables 22 and 23 (78),

where it can be seen that the proportion of students aged 25 or over amongst United Kingdom students is less than for the student body as a whole, though the upward trend remains.

Looking in more detail at the developments of recent years, it is clear that the existence of a minimum entry qualifications does not represent an unsurmountable barrier. All institutions seem able to admit, if they so wish, mature students without such qualifications. However the extent to which this actually takes place still seems to be fairly limited and though we may note a trend towards broadening of horizons (79), it must be remembered that one is still dealing with a fairly marginal activity. First degree study at most higher education institutions (and this is particularly true of the universities) is still primarily the activity of the 18-21 year old. It is to this group that the institution is "*geared*" and it is only too easy to conceive as an administrator's nightmare a significant move away from this homogeneous group, for whom standardized and clear cut rules of entry apply, towards the diversity which a large mature entry represents (if only in terms of attempting to meet the rubric that a person is "*adjudged to be capable of pursuing successfully a course of this kind*"). Furthermore there is a question in the last analysis, of priority. For instance a university admissions administrator was quoted several years ago as saying :

> "*Where there is intense competition for places, especially in arts, how can a university defend itself when rejecting those who have passed 'O' and 'A' levels in the normal way with moderate results, and accept mature persons with no normal qualifications ? ... G.C.E. is open to all candidates and nobody is prevented from bringing his merits with that examination*" (80).

The extent to which such a view still holds sway may be put to the test in the near future. The significant drop in the 18 year old entry forecasted for the nineties is preceded by an equally significant increase If the number of places available are not significantly increased (a

possible option) then competition will become keener and the question of priorities become more sharply focussed. It may well be that despite the calls for a diversification of clientele to prepare for the "*lean*" years of the nineties, institutional inertia in the "*fat*" years of the eighties may temporarily at least put a brake on the aspirations of prospective adult undergraduates. As has been pointed out (81) innovation is unlikely to take place during periods of increased demand.

If however there is to be any significant increase in the enrolment of adult students on first degree courses then it would appear that the two A level minimum entry qualification and the boundary which it forms between advanced and non advanced courses must lose some of the pre-eminence which they hold at present. In the first place the qualifications itself will, increasingly, have to be set aside and alternative admission schemes sought, schemes which reflect the diverse experiences which adults possess and in which the emphasis shifts from that of setting up barriers to be overcome, to providing the individual with opportunities to assess and come to a decision on the course of action best suited to his or her learning needs. Additionally it can of course be argued that the advanced-non advanced boundary does not carry the same significance for adults as it does for the teenager. For the latter, if he or she continues at school beyond the school leaving age, the boundary represents the transition (and the hurdle to be overcome) in moving from the secondary level - school environment, to the higher level - college environment, clearly a significant move for the adolescent in the United Kingdom (particularly England and Wales) since very many leave their homes and locality. For the adult no such significance need be attached. Thus it could be argued that those in their first year at the Open University are technically, for a proportion of the time, engaged in non-advanced work. But the cross over point (if it could ever be identified) does not have significance for the student. It is also of interest that the two part-time evening university degree courses referred to earlier (Hull and Kent) start with a Foundation year to provide the unqualified adult with a realistic first step towards a degree. In this way not only do

the "*boundary conditions*" acquire much more varied and diverse characteristics and may even see a change in emphasis from preventative to enabling action ; the very location of the boundary becomes blurred, indeed may lose its meaning.

Whether this takes place generally or not, it is clear that boundaries between levels of study will be subject to re-examination if adults are to be admitted to first degree studies in significant numbers. This is highlighted by a rather different concern to that discussed above, a concern described by McINTOSH (82). She outlines the danger inherent in any open admission process whereby an "*open door*" becomes a "*revolving door*". This is the plight of the students who are faced with studies whose standards are well beyond them. McINTOSH describes the so called "*cooling out*" function inherent in such situations whereby "*students who are failing or barely passing have to have their expectations disappointed*". If this is to be done as constructively as possible there is a need to allow students to be counselled and have the opportunity of taking a field of study which is more appropriate. The "*necessity for the provision of genuine alternatives at different levels*" which this implies again raises the question of the nature of the boundaries concerned, since such a provision can easily be thwarted if transfer from one course to another is hindered by, for instance, institutional barriers.

The above comments highlight the needs of the student in terms of information, advice and preparation. The progress made in these areas has already been noted. Developments would seem to be very much in their infancy. Even in the information area there is an absence of comprehensive documentation bringing together what at present exists only in the publications of individual institutions. There are moves to remedy this situation ; thus a leaflet, providing information to mature students on applying to universities, has recently been published jointly by the T.U.C., and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (83). More significantly the Open College network recently developed in the North West of England seems to represent an important step in moving towards

a situation where the adult's requirements in the context of access to higher education become a normal part of the system.

Other considerations also arise which take us beyond the formal and institutional aspects of access. That these aspects do not constitute the only barriers to the aspiring student is revealed in a recent Open University study of the factors deterring people from applying following an initial enquiry, or from taking up an offer of a place with the University (84). The "*open access*" policy practised by the University would suggest that formal barriers (other than the limit on places available) do not exist. Nevertheless the study concludes that the Open University is still far from being truly open - "*at every stage, from actually hearing of the Open University to accepting the offer of a place, barriers exist which discriminate against particular types of people, many of whom have been deprived of educational opportunities in the past*" (85). Thus it was shown that housewives, manual workers and those with a terminal age of education of 15 or under were "*over represented*" amongst those enquirers who did not proceed to apply, in comparison with the situation so far as applicants were concerned - the converse being true in the case of teachers and technical personnel. Further, an examination of the reasons for not applying, amongst different groups revealed that "*compared with teachers, manual workers were much more likely to mention cost, summer school attendance, difficulty of the courses and difficulties associated with their type of work. A very similar pattern emerges, when we compare those with high and low terminal ages of education*" (86). Such evidence provides insights on the factors lying beyond purely formal considerations of access, which effectively cause the University to be less open to certain groups of people than to others, and puts the question of barriers in a different light. As was stated in a recent comparative study on equality of educational opportunity,

> "*once an institution... throws down the structural and qualificatory barriers associated with entry to higher education, it merely reveals the fundamental social-structure barriers that lurk beneath the more*

ostensible pedagogic hurdles. And in so doing, not only poses new questions about the anatomy of educational opportunity, but also shows how crude were the assumptions on which previous definitions rested in the past" (87).

This of course is a challenge not merely in the limited area of concern of this document, but to the whole field of continuing education.

In so far as the modes of study appropriate to the adult students are concerned, the emphasis would appear to be on flexibility - the need for so called "*time free, space free, age free*" programmes which attempt to meet the student in his own time by providing courses on a part-time basis and as has been noted, this is a feature of the three institutions labelled as exceptions earlier in this document.

Looking at the other institutions of higher education it would appear that the "*binary*" split seems to reflect real differences. Part-time work at universities up to first degree level is overwhelmingly confined to one particular unit - the extra mural department - and to one particular area of work - non vocational adult education. The converse seems to be true of the further education sector. The difficulties of introducing part-time patterns into what in numerical terms might be referred as the mainstream teaching responsibility of universities - preparing students for first degrees - are underlined by the fact that the Hull development referred to earlier has remained unique for almost a decade. Another pointer in the same direction is provided by recent reports on the role of universities in continuing education, prepared by the Association of University Teachers (A.U.T.) and a joint committee of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (C.V.C.P.) and the Universities Council for Adult Education (U.C.A.E.) (88). In both reports it is suggested that the universities' contribution towards an increased participation of adults in degree studies could be met by the creation of Birkbeck type facilities outside London, possibly as separate colleges. This proposal suggests that the mature student's interests can best be met by creating

separate, well defined units which, at least in part, are funded separately from the parent institution. Such a structure has been defended in the case of extra mural departments, in that it gives protection against the possibility of the university's specific commitment to adults being swallowed up by the "*mainstream*" activities, underlining the view that for universities in particular, the commitment to the 18-21 year old forms a barrier against significant modifications in the direction of the adult undergraduate.

The difference between the universities and the further education sector, referred to above in the context of the prevalence of part-time study in the respective institutions, can however be challenged, at least in the context of those further education institutions whose work lays primarily in the advanced sector. Thus so far as the development of C.N.A.A. first degrees at polytechnics is concerned a recent study (89) notes one of the recommendations of the Robbins Report that "*we should not wish colleges (i.e. non university institutions) to be approved (for degree work) by the Council (C.N.A.A.) if there were no nucleus of full time work*" (90) and concludes that this "*recommendation, relegating part-time students to secondary consideration from the C.N.A.A. (and presumably from the colleges, primarily the polytechnics) has been accepted*" (91). This is clearly seen in Tables 9 and 12 which indicate that the enrolments for C.N.A.A. full time and sandwich degree courses are not matched by the part-time provision. The polytechnics in developing degree work have concentrated on full time and sandwich courses and by implication the 18-21 year old. A related phenomenon, discussed in another study of polytechnics (92) is the progressive decline of sub degree and part-time work in favour of full time degree work at these institutions. This trend is identified as a process of "*academic drift*" (referred to earlier) implying the tendency for the institutions concerned to become more and more like universities. If such is the case then the barriers created by a commitment to the 18-21 year old referred to above in the context of universities will in due course be equally strong in polytechnics. Present trends, as outlined

in Tables 11 and 12 would however suggest that in the context of part-time first degree studies, the further education sector is exhibiting a very different development compared to that of universities and that the gap, between the respective provisions is widening.

As has been noted the need for flexibility leads to "*credit transfer*" considerations - the accumulation of course units or credits towards a degree, at different places and at different times. Here the development of modular degree structures is of considerable significance in facilitating the process. Reference has already been made to the adoption of such a structure by the Open University. A number of other universities have accepted modular schemes in certain areas (including the University of London - thus allowing Birkbeck to run modular courses to the obvious advantage of its part-time students). The C.N.A.A. has also accepted credit accumulation patterns in its validation exercises, and the Dip.H.E. is wholly credit based.

A development that may well become significant should modular schemes, and the attendant flexibility in terms of time and location to which reference has already been made, become prevalent is that the "*end product*", the first degree in the case of this document, will lose its importance as the overriding goal, while the component courses increase in significance. For a given person it is by no means obvious that his or her needs at a given point in time are met by following a fairly lengthy programme ending in a diploma or degree ; individual courses within such programmes may be of greater significance, whether in a vocational or non vocational context. This is indeed the inherent difference between the "*front end model*" of education whereby the adolescent is equipped with all the necessary "*learning*" and "*training*" for life, and as such requires a final imprimata at the end of a lengthy and unbroken education process, and a "*lifelong model*" where the need for learning for whatever reason, will arise recurrently. The beginnings of such a development can already be seen in some polytechnics and the

Open University, in that so called "*associate students*" register with the institutions concerned, not for degree programmes but for individual courses within those programmes. Indeed in the case of the Open University the undergraduate's position can be regarded as similar, given the possibility of "*dropping in*" or "*out*" of the system at intervals determined by the individual himself. For mature persons then it may well be more meaningful to talk of "*courses for adults*" not of "*adult degree programmes*" in the context of this document, thus creating a much more fluid situation for the institutions concerned. At the same time the recurrent pattern requires that mutual recognition of courses or credits exists between institutions.

The above considerations, both in the context of access and mode of study, clearly indicate that the relationships between institutions assume considerable importance in adapting to the needs of adults. Additionally the importance of the availability of suitable opportunities locally has been stressed. Accordingly co-ordination and co-operation among institutions at the local level should clearly be fostered - without such co-ordination and co-operation the individual's ambitions may well be thwarted by inter-institutional barriers. An interesting prototype in the context of local co-operation is represented by the developments in N.W.England. Here the Open College arrangement provides access opportunities, designed specifically for adults, to the institutions of higher education in the area, while the transfer arrangements between the Open University on the one hand, and Lancaster University and Preston Polytechnic (implicit in the Open University - C.N.A.A. agreement) on the other, opens the door to inter-institutional movement involving a wide range of study modes as well as subject choice.

How can co-ordination be achieved generally ? Some may see the answer in terms of "*legislation from above*", involving as an extreme solution the creation for instance of comprehensive universities whereby all post secondary institutions in a given locality are merged. More in keeping with the United Kingdom tradition is the development, as in N.W.England, of initiatives from the grass roots upwards, giving room for adaptation

in the light of local variations and practices. The problem here however is that inequalities between one area and another would occur, given for instance the wide disparity between universities in terms of the admission of adults. Additionally some areas or regions have far fewer higher education institutions or places than others. Another problem is of course the inherent suspicion on the part of universities of any regional, let along local, co-ordination to which they might be subjected. Such arrangements are seen as curtailing their independance (the debate concerning the devolution of certain parliamentary powers including the responsibility for higher education, from Westminster to Scotland and Wales, provides an interesting insight on this suspicion).

One possibility, advocated by the T.U.C, is that a certain quota of each University's intake should be set aside for mature students (93) (interestingly, universities were the only higher education institutions for which the T.U.C. suggested that quotas be set). Such quotas applied in the context of each university's "*hinterland*" would not only create a definite commitment towards adult participation - it might also encourage the desired co-operation between institutions in that area, in terms of explorations of ways of meeting the quota. Universities would of course protest that this would be a gross infringement of their freedom to choose these students, but this is not necessarily a precedent. After all the granting of closed scholarships to pupils of certain schools is a time honoured Oxbridge tradition and similar arrangements, whereby a number of places are offered to certain categories of applicants (normally linked with a school or area) exist at other universities. The notion of a quota for mature students is surely not so very different.

In some ways the fate of the prospective adult undergraduate may depend more on the financial situation than on questions of access or mode of study. In fact, financial discrimination against the adult effectively takes place in a number of ways. Thus, as has been noted, any advanced course undertaken earlier in his or her career, debars the individual from the mandatory right to an award. Additionally full time first degree

studies qualify for mandatory awards while part-time first degree studies qualify only for discretionary awards. However the question of finance raises the wider issue of the student's employment situation and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this problem should not simply be tackled at the grant level, but in the context of considerations relating to paid educational leave (P.E.L.). Thus, relating to the earlier comments on hidden barriers in open access situations, it should be noted that the most likely responses from manual workers for not applying for a place with the Open University were i) not enough time available for study, ii) unable to attend summer school iii) type of job makes Open University study difficult and iv) financial commitment too great (the last three responses were much more likely in the case of manual workers than in the case of teachers). The significance of the employment situation in this context is clear, as are the possibilities presented by P.E.L.

It is beyond the scope of this document to discuss the nature and application of various leave programmes. However, it is worth noting that in a recent study on this topic (94), the authors reported that

> "*one of the most striking common features among the countries studied is the role of the trade unions both in initiating and sustaining the debate on educational leave and in the final implementation of policies. It can be stated that in Europe an educational leave policy can be implemented only if the trade unions actively support it. We can say this of no other single group*".

If this is at all relevant to the United Kingdom, the role of the T.U.C. should not merely be that of a pressure group advocating the expansion of places for adults (particularly those from working class backgrounds) but one of actively pursuing a strategy orientated towards the creation of educational leave entitlements and in outreach activities designed to provide means of giving those who most need further education, the opportunity of fulfilling that need, for instance on the lines of the FOVUX project in Sweden (95).

VIII - CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the objectives of this document, as noted in one of the early sections, has been to investigate the extent to which adults are expected to follow the "*norm*" as laid down for the 18-21 year old. At the present time it seems reasonable to conclude that adults are expected to a large extent to follow this norm and that this state of affairs is one that hinders rather than encourages the aspiring mature undergraduates. The increased participation noted in this document has (with the notable exception of the Open University) taken place despite, rather than because of the provision currently available, and in any case this increase can hardly be regarded as a "*flood*". A number of initiatives have been, and are being taken, and there are many instances of practices being adopted in which the needs of adults appear as a consideration (and indeed in certain circumstances, the main consideration). But these are usually the result of the initiatives of individual institutions, certainly not the early manifestations of a co-ordinated policy - such as the 25/4 policy relating to the admission of unqualified adults into the universities in Sweden (96). By and large the structures of most higher education institutions, geared as they are to the 18 year old entrant, provide not only direct but indirect barriers against the prospective adult student. The dice is loaded against a substantial adult intake not only in the more obvious areas (e.g. admissions, grants) but in other, apparently less direct ways (e.g. inter-institutional co-operation, study mode, flexibility, advisory services, response to local needs). The sheer weight of numbers means that in the last analysis, adults enter higher education on the 18 year old's terms. In this the universities seem less able than their further education partners to instigate the changes necessary to favour adults. Ralf DAHRENDORF in discussing the likely contribution of universities towards continuing education underlines the problem clearly :

> "*Yet in fact the style of our universities is such that only school-leavers are really welcome. As usual it is awkward to generalise.*

Oxford and Cambridge are more clearly geared to young students than, say, the London School of Economics, let alone Birkbeck College. But by and large it can be argued that the classroom style of teaching, the definition of the student's role from the organization of the Students' Union to student participation and the substantive requirements of teaching are all geared to 18 to 21 year olds rather than mature people with years of life experience. If anything, this climate has become more entrenched in the period of post-Robbins expansion. Indeed it may be said that the Robbins report had the effect of making mature students rather unwelcome in universities. It became the social purpose to provide places of study for growing proportions of growing age groups passing through the secondary system" (97).

His rather depressing conclusion is that significant developments in the field of continuing education including the areas discussed in this document "*would be up against built-in rigidities of the present educational system which are not to be underestimated*".

Much of the recent debate in the United Kingdom on the future of higher education has on the part of many people, including adult educators, dwelt on the possibility that such rigidities may in fact be broken by the predicted fall in demand from the dominant 18-21 age group, in other words that the converse of the observation made earlier that "*innovation is unlikely in periods of increasing demand*" is also true i.e. that innovation will be facilitated in periods of decreasing demand. One example which seems to support the latter hypothesis relates to the Dip.H.E. This new diploma has been treated with suspicion by many (no university prepares students for such a diploma) and it is plausible to suggest that the high proportion of "*unqualified*" mature students (the innovation) is the consequence of a lack of interest on the part of 18-21 year olds in registering for the diploma. It is however by no means obvious that the hypothesis can be applied with equal validity to all higher education institutions : in particular those who predict that

universities will be forced to open their doors to adults may well be proved wrong. In the first place it has been suggested that it is not the universities task to cope with the predicted large increase in student numbers which precedes the decline of the 1990's i.e. to expand only to be faced with the problems of falling demand later. Thus Lord BOYLE the current Chairman of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals was reported recently as having said that "*the local authority sector of higher education had a duty to react quickly to whatever demands were made on it. Universities would serve the public best if they retained the right to choose their own priorities*" (98). And secondly, it does not necessarily follow that the problems of falling demand and the consequent possibility of the admission of large numbers of mature students, will fall equally on all institutions alike. The distinction made between "*noble*" and "*less noble*" institutions in the context of higher education structures so far as prestige, access conditions and disciplines are concerned (99), may well possess a validity here in that while some institutions (noble) may find themselves insulated from the difficulties in the 1990's in view of their perceived prestige, status and so on, others (less noble) will be forced to look elsewhere for clients because of their inability to attract sufficient 18-21 year olds. It is at least plausible that the binary boundary could be taken as the divide between "*noble*" and "*less noble*" institutions and in that case, the above observation suggests that first degree opportunities for adults arising from demographic changes will come from the polytechnics and colleges of higher education, not universities.

The universities do however have a commitment to adult education in the form of extra mural work. Indeed to the outsider it may seem strange for instance that, given the existence of a network of extra mural departments throughout the United Kingdom, it was felt necessary to create the Open University as a new and independent institution. There are however a number of factors which suggest that the universities were unwilling to undertake the task on the scale envisaged for the Open University. Firstly

reference has been made to the strength of the "*Great Tradition*" ; the view that extra mural work is concerned with liberal education - non vocational work, not the preparation of students for examinations leading to qualifications. Secondly, there was, no doubt, at the time strong opposition to instigating the innovations which would certainly be necessary in order to draw adults in large numbers (it would appear that the part-time psychology degree at the University of Hull, referred to earlier, faced considerable opposition at the beginning, and it is not without significance that the pattern it set was not repeated until almost a decade afterwards). And finally, to quote the Vice Chancellor of the Open University :

> "*It was often argued that an institution such as the Open University would be an unnecessary development, since all that it could do could equally well be done by the other universities acting in concert. This may be so in theory, but the idea that in 1969 the other universities of Britain might seriously have contemplated moving, either singly or collectively, into the field of part-time adult education is unrealistic. It could not have happened. The overriding view in the academic community was that this problem did not concern them ; it ought to concern somebody else*" (100).

Nowadays however the idea of certification would appear to be a far more acceptable part of extra mural activities. The Hull development is now being followed by a similar scheme at Kent. And a number of Directors of Extra Mural Departments now assert that the presentation of first degree study opportunities, on adult, not 18-21 year old terms, is an objective to be pursued whole heartedly in making universities more open to their surrounding communities. It remains to be seen whether the traditional separation of extra mural departments from other sections within their parent institutions, a separation that no doubt preserves the integrity of non-vocational university adult education, will impede attempts by such departments to spearhead moves towards far greater adult participation in first degree courses throughout their universities.

Perhaps the greatest danger in the context of the present debate, lays in an enthusiasm for significant adult participation in first degree studies based on purely numerical considerations, namely a redistribution of the respective 18-21 year old and mature student populations in favour of the latter. It does not appear to be an overstatement to suggest that very significant structural changes will need to take place in institutions of higher education if this redistribution is to be successful. In the United Kingdom the Open University serves as a good example of this need, and it is no doubt the absence or presence of a capacity for change that ultimately will determine the future role of institutions of higher education in so far as mature undergraduates are concerned.

TABLES

Table 1 ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS IN FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (1), 1975-76

Type of institution	Number of Institutions	Number of students enrolled on advanced and non-advanced courses (2)	Number of students enrolled on advanced courses (2)	Advanced enrolment as % of total enrolment	Total enrolment including non-vocational courses
Polytechnics England and Wales	30	163,002	145,691	89	177,801
Central Institutions Scotland	14	12,628	10,299	82	14,647
Ulster College N.Ireland	1	4,763	4,296	90	4,763
Direct Grant Institutions	18	5,522	3,834	69	6,656
Other Maintained and Assisted Major Establishments England and Wales	527	995,793	99,907	10	1,758,415
Evening Institutes England and Wales	7,260	48,008	257	0.5	1,981,657
Day Colleges Scotland	70	145,295	16,992	12	365,668 (3)
Evening Centres Scotland	132	14,111	10	0.1	
Local Authority Institutions of Further Education N.Ireland	28	36,419	476	1.3	707,890 (3)

(1) Those institutions whose status in 1975-76 was still that of College of Education are not included.
(2) In England and Wales, refers to courses leading to a qualification ; in Northern Ireland and Scotland refers to vocational courses including all courses leading to a qualification.
(3) Official statistics for N.Ireland and Scotland do not distinguish between the non-vocational provision offered by colleges on the one hand and evening centres on the other. Accordingly total enrolment figures refer to both types of institutions.

Table 2

EXPECTED PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION OF ADVANCED WORK IN FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN 1981

Type of institution	Number of colleges
Polytechnics	30
Other institutions	
- with over 90% advanced work	67
- with between 30% and 90% advanced work	57
- with less than 30% advanced work	264

Table 3

NON VOCATIONAL STUDENT POPULATIONS BY COURSE PROVIDER, 1968-69

	L.E.A.	Extra Mural Departments	W.E.A.
England	1,606,480	126,528	90,267
Northern Ireland	27,349	4,122	- (2)
Scotland	170,185 (1)	19,617	1,987
Wales	94,590	16,216	11,412

(1) Includes the Central Institutions in Scotland.
(2) W.E.A. courses organised in conjunction with the Extra Mural Department, Queen's University, Belfast.

Table 4 STUDENTS ENROLLED ON EVENING COURSES IN VARIOUS EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (EXCLUDING POST-GRADUATES) 1975-76

Type of establishment	Nature of courses	Number of students enrolled on evening courses	Number of students aged 21 or over enrolled on evening courses (1)	Total student enrolment, day and evening
Polytechnics England and Wales	Leading to a qualification	19,239	not published	154,549
do.	All courses	28,971	26,532	169,348
Central Institutions Scotland	Vocational	447	408	12,567
Ulster College N.Ireland	Vocational	330	315	4,763
Other Maintained and Assisted Major Establishments England and Wales	Leading to a qualification	239,904	not published	993,200
do.	All courses	770,328	604,804	1,755,822
Day Colleges Scotland	Vocational	33,367	17,794	145,295
Local Authority Institutions of Further Education N.Ireland	Vocational	13,783	7,965	36,419

(1) Assumed that all post-graduates are aged 21 or over.

Table 5 ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS ON INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING COURSES (EXCLUDING POSTGRADUATES) AT COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Year	Total enrolment	Enrolment aged 25 or over	
		Number	As % of total
1964-65	59,883	7,301	12.2
1965-66	70,725	9,312	13.2
1966-67	82,689	12,440	15.0
1967-68	93,050	15,841	17.0
1968-69	100,572	18,926	18.8
1969-70	103,171	19,816	19.2
1970-71	103,736	19,498	18.8
1971-72	104,459	19,140	18.3
1972-73	104,428	19,177	18.4
1973-74	102,578	19,195	18.7
1974-75	96,667	18,356	19.0
1975-76	82,369	15,548	18.9

Table 6 UNDERGRADUATES STUDYING ON A FULL-TIME OR SANDWICH BASIS AT U.K. UNIVERSITIES (1)

Year	Total number of undergraduates	Undergraduates aged 25 or over	
		Number	As % of total
1965-66	144,494	7,015	4.8
1966-67	156,811	7,304	4.7
1967-68	169,610	7,840	4.6
1968-69	178,948	8,909	5.0
1969-70	186,217	9,589	5.1
1970-71	192,436	10,301	5.3
1971-72	197,262	11,016	5.6
1972-73	199,907	11,653	5.8
1973-74	203,601	12,462	6.0
1974-75	209,078	13,447	6.4
1975-76	218,088	14,367	6.6

(1) Excluding the Open University.

Table 7 ADMISSIONS TO U.K. UNIVERSITIES (1)

Year	% of total acceptances onto first degree and diploma courses (UCCA) aged 25 or over	% of total undergraduate entrants aged 25 or over
1971-72	3.2	5.1
1972-73	3.8	5.3
1973-74	4.2	5.9
1974-75	4.5	6.4
1975-76	5.1	6.3

(1) Excluding the Open University.

Table 8

APPLICATIONS FOR FIRST DEGREE AND DIPLOMA PLACES AT U.K. UNIVERSITIES VIA THE UCCA SCHEME

Year	Total Applications	Applicants aged 25 or over	
		Number	As % of total
1970-71	123,984	6,213	5.0
1971-72	124,359	6,697	5.4
1972-73	124,634	6,973	5.6
1973-74	125,780	7,312	5.8
1974-75	131,478	8,095	6.2
1975-76	142,307	9,626	6.8

Table 9

STUDENTS ON FULL-TIME OR SANDWICH FIRST DEGREE COURSES AT FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Year	Study leading to University degree			Study leading to CNAA degree			All degrees		
	Number of Students	Students aged 25 or over		Number of Students	Students aged 25 or over		Number of Students	Students aged 25 or over	
		Number	As % of total		Number	As % of total		Number	As % of total
1965-66	10,200	1,600	15.7	4,257	155	3.6	14,457	1,755	12.1
1966-67	10,732	1,524	14.2	6,887	374	5.4	17,619	1,898	10.8
1967-68	11,531	1,492	12.9	10,074	555	5.5	21,605	2,047	9.5
1968-69	11,918	1,452	12.2	13,632	926	6.8	25,550	2,378	9.3
1969-70	11,297	1,378	12.2	17,578	1,230	7.0	28,875	2,608	9.0
1970-71	11,567	1,417	12.2	20,440	1,619	7.9	32,007	3,036	9.5
1971-72	11,193	1,382	12.4	24,910	2,006	8.1	36,103	3,388	9.4
1972-73	9,541	1,251	13.1	29,314	2,690	9.2	38,855	3,941	10.1
1973-74	6,833	873	12.8	34,702	3,780	10.9	41,535	4,653	11.2
1974-75	4,119	578	14.0	50,086	5,256	10.5	54,205	5,834	10.7
1975-76	2,139	366	17.1	58,853	7,077	12.0	60,992	7,443	12.2

Table 10

ENTRANTS ONTO CNAA PART-TIME FIRST DEGREE COURSES, ENGLAND AND WALES

Year	Total number of entrants	Number aged 25 or over	Number aged 25 or over as % of total
1970-71	490	350	71
1971-72	720	440	61
1972-73	945	580	61
1973-74	995	695	70
1974-75	1,515	999	66
1975-76	1,713	1,147	67

Table 11

NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATES STUDYING FOR A FIRST DEGREE ON A PART-TIME BASIS AT U.K. UNIVERSITIES (1)

Year	English Universities and the University of Wales (2)		Scottish Universities		Northern Ireland Universities		United Kingdom Universities (2)	
	Number	As % of total first degree students	Number	As % of total first degree students	Number	As % of total first degree students	Number	As % of total first degree students
1971-72	337	0.2	256	0.8	311	4.5	904	0.5
1972-73	216	0.1	227	0.7	240	3.6	683	0.3
1973-74	250	0.1	243	0.7	215	3.4	708	0.4
1974-75	294	0.2	250	0.7	190	3.0	734	0.4
1975-76	492	0.3	567	1.6	205	3.2	1,264	0.6

(1) Excepting Birkbeck College (University of London) and the Open University.
(2) Estimated to take account of the exclusion of Birkbeck College.

Table 12

NUMBER OF PART-TIME STUDENTS ON FIRST DEGREE COURSES AT FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES (1)

Year	Part-time day			Part-time evening			Part-time total			
	Leading to University degree	Leading to CNAA degree	Total	Leading to University degree	Leading to CNAA degree	Total	Leading to University degree	Leading to CNAA degree	Total	
									Number	As % of total first degree population
1966-67	900	-		1,950	-	1,950	2,850	-	2,850	13.4
1967-68	800	82	882	1,920	7	1,927	2,720	89	2,809	11.1
1968-69	730	337	1,067	2,140	9	2,149	2,870	346	3,216	10.9
1969-70	650	736	1,386	2,250	-	2,250	2,900	736	3,636	10.9
1970-71	612	786	1,398	2,314	147	2,461	2,926	933	3,859	10.8
1971-72	456	1,239	1,695	1,963	245	2,208	2,419	1,484	3,903	9.8
1972-73	341	1,704	2,045	1,864	286	2,150	2,205	1,990	4,195	9.7
1973-74	271	2,037	2,308	1,475	485	1,960	1,746	2,522	4,268	9.3
1974-75	188	2,642	2,830	1,462	602	2,064	1,650	3,244	4,894	8.3
1975-76	116	3,093	3,209	1,425	937	2,362	1,541	4,030	5,571	8.4

(1) This table is not strictly comparable with Table 10 since a few courses have been omitted in drawing up statistics for the latter.

Table 13

STUDENTS ON B.Ed. COURSES (1), NORTHERN IRELAND

Year	Total enrolment	Students aged 25 or over	As % of total
1968-69	376	6	1.6
1969-70	564	18	3.2
1970-71	694	25	3.6
1971-72	761	37	4.9
1972-73	545	33	6.0
1973-74	350	19	5.4
1974-75	456	35	7.7
1975-76	648	66	10.2

(1) From 1972 onwards numbers refer to students on final two years of 4-Year course.

Table 14

UNDERGRADUATES AT BIRKBECK COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Year	Number of undergraduates studying part-time	As % of total number of undergraduates
1970-71	1,125	93
1971-72	1,102	94
1972-73	1,111	92
1973-74	1,072	92
1974-75	1,035	91
1975-76	1,059	93
1976-77	1,059	94

Table 15

EXTERNAL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM REGISTERED "PRIVATELY" WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Year	Number of private students
1969-70	7,850
1970-71	8,536
1971-72	9,039
1972-73	8,734
1973-74	9,535
1974-75	8,842
1975-76	9,113
1976-77	9,717
1977-78	9,899

Table 16

SUBJECT CHOICES OF CANDIDATES FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM SEEKING FIRST DEGREE OR DIPLOMA PLACES AT UNITED KINGDOM UNIVERSITIES, 1976

Subject group	% of candidates aged 25 or over	% of candidates, all ages
Medicine, dentistry and health	14	13
Engineering and technology	8	12
Science	9	18
Social, administrative and business studies	38	29
Arts	27	23
Other	4	5

Table 17

DISTRIBUTION OF APPLICANTS AMONGST THE OPEN UNIVERSITY'S FOUNDATION COURSES, 1977

Foundation Course	% of applicants
Arts	35
Social Sciences	27
Mathematics	13
Science	14
Technology	11

Table 18

DISTRIBUTION, BY DEGREE COURSE, OF EXTERNAL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM REGISTERED "PRIVATELY" WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, 1977-78

Degree		Student registration
Bachelor of Divinity	(B.D.)	754
Bachelor of Arts	(B.A.)	2,860
Bachelor of Law	(Ll.B.)	4,400
Bachelor of Music	(B.Mus.)	214
Bachelor of Science	(B.Sc.)	385
B.Sc. (Economics)		256
B.Sc. (Sociology)		30

Table 19

DISTRIBUTION BY SUBJECT AREA OF FIRST DEGREE POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS (SAMPLE), 1972 AND 1973

Subject area	% of students aged 25 and over	% of students, all ages
Medical, Health and Welfare	0	0.2
Engineering and Technology	33	28
Science	22	20
Social, Administrative and Business Studies	28	31
Professional and Vocational Studies	8	7
Language, Literature and Area Studies	4	11
Music, Drama, Art and Design	1	1
Other	4	2

Table 20

ENROLMENT OF UNDERGRADUATES AGED 25 OR OVER ON FULL-TIME AND SANDWICH COURSES COURSES AT U.K. UNIVERSITIES (1)

English Universities	1973-74		1976-77	
	Students aged 25 or over	As % of total population	Students aged 25 or over	As % of total population
Aston	160	6	292	7
Bath	105	6	128	4
Birmingham	183	4	472	7
Bradford	112	4	200	5
Bristol	259	5	283	5
Brunel	97	6	192	10
Cambridge	191	2	320	4
City	116	6	217	10
Durham	127	5	188	5
East Anglia	81	3	300	9
Essex	90	6	439	22
Exeter	100	3	118	3
Hull	208	6	285	7
Keele	119	7	113	6
Kent	69	4	193	7
Lancaster	181	8	309	9
Leeds	420	6	426	6
Leicester	153	6	90	3
Liverpool	149	3	396	6
London (2)	1,605	7	2,213	8
Loughborough	87	4	151	4
Manchester	307	5	479	6
UMIST	99	4	129	5
Newcastle	247	5	311	5
Nottingham	106	3	211	4
Oxford	271	3	279	3
Reading	311	8	265	6
Salford	125	4	318	9
Sheffield	190	4	268	4
Southampton	147	4	259	5
Surrey	131	6	161	7
Sussex	164	6	448	13
Warwick	75	4	309	8
York	73	4	136	6

(1) Excluding the Open University
(2) Including Birkbeck College.

Table 20 (cont.)

	1973-74		1976-77	
	Students aged 25 or over	As % of total population	Students aged 25 or over	As % of total population
University of Wales Constituent Colleges				
Aberystwyth	53	3	92	4
Bangor	117	6	126	5
Cardiff	182	6	441	12
Lampeter	14	4	26	5
Swansea	209	7	191	7
Welsh School of Medicine	Not available	Not available	63	10
UWIST	209	12	201	9
Scottish Universities				
Aberdeen	372	8	350	7
Dundee	141	6	275	11
Edinburgh	552	7	477	6
Glasgow	345	5	431	5
Heriot-Watt	206	10	205	8
St. Andrews	69	3	86	3
Stirling	91	9	253	13
Strathclyde	527	11	618	12
Northern Ireland Universities				
Belfast	276	5	277	5
Coleraine	59	5	273	17

Table 21

APPLICATIONS AND OFFERS MADE FOR PLACES AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Year	Number of applications	Number of places available
1970	43,444	25,000
1971	35,182	20,500
1972	32,046	17,000
1973	35,011	15,000
1974	52,537	20,000
1975	52,916	17,000
1976	49,956	20,000
1977	45,293	21,000

Table 22

APPLICANTS ACCEPTED VIA THE UCCA SCHEME
ONTO FIRST DEGREE AND DIPLOMA COURSES AT U.K. UNIVERSITIES

	United Kingdom Students		Overseas Students		Total	
Year	Number accepted aged 25 or over	As % of total	Number accepted aged 25 or over	As % of total	Number accepted aged 25 or over	As % of total
1970-71	1,721	3.0	205	8.7	1,926	3.2
1971-72	1,903	3.3	381	12.9	2,284	3.8
1972-73	2,294	3.7	312	9.1	2,606	4.2
1973-74	2,450	4.1	441	10.3	2,891	4.5
1974-75	3,062	4.3	558	10.2	3,620	5.1
1975-76	3,255	4.4	662	10.9	3,917	5.3

Table 23

ENTRANTS ONTO FULL-TIME CNAA FULL-TIME AND SANDWICH FIRST DEGREE COURSES, ENGLAND AND WALES (1)

Year	United Kingdom Students		Overseas Students		Total	
	Number of entrants aged 25 or over	As % of total	Number of entrants aged 25 or over	As % of total	Number of entrants aged 25 or over	As % of total
1970-71	345	4.9	115	21.7	460	6.0
1971-72	465	5.0	150	20.7	605	6.0
1972-73	535	5.1	190	20.9	725	6.4
1973-74	685	5.9	275	22.6	960	7.5
1974-75	1,193	8.1	490	24.6	1,683	10.1
1975-76	1,581	9.4	705	23.9	2,286	11.6

(1) This table is not strictly comparable with Table 9 since a few courses have been omitted in drawing up the statistics.

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Occasional Paper no. 1, based on an address to the third International Conference on Higher Education at Lancaster in September 1975. The paper reviews the difficulties of considering specific problems of access to higher education without looking at the structure overall, reaching the conclusion that a considerably more diffused system than at present is emerging.

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.EDUCATIONAL LEAVES FOR EMPLOYEES. EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE FOR AMERICAN CONSIDERATION

by Konrad von Moltke
and Norbert Schneevoigt
San Francisco, London, Jossey Bass, 1977, 269 p.
ISBN 0 87589 316 3
$ 12.95

This book is a study of educational leave policies in nine European countries with particular emphasis on four - France, Germany, Sweden, and Italy - who have introduced major legislation in this direction. It analyses the problems involved and draws a number of conclusions for the future. The study was originally prepared for the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, and has a foreword by Clark Kerr.

.PATTERNS OF EQUALITY

by Guy Neave
Windsor, NFER, 1976, 150 p.
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A report to the European Commission, on the influence of new structures of higher education on the equality of opportunity. It describes the Polytechnics and the Open University of the United Kingdom, the "vise skole" in Yugoslavia, the "Gesamthochschule" in Germany, the "District College" in Norway and the "Instituts Universitaires de Technologie" in France. A postscript shows the significance of this study in the context of Britain today.

Will soon be published in French and German.

.LA FORMATION DES ENSEIGNANTS DEMAIN

by Gilbert de Landsheere
Paris, Casterman, 1975, 298 p.
ISBN 2 203 20218 1
FF.45.-

A study from Plan Europe 2000, concerned with a number of particular problems for the teaching profession such as recruitment, status, and research, but also more generally with the need to unify the profession at all its levels in response to what the author sees as a steady coming-together of educational structures.

.EDUCATION WITHOUT FRONTIERS

edited by Gabriel Fragnière
London, Duckworth, 1976, 207 p.
ISBN 0 7156 0988 2 (cloth cover)
0 7156 1162 3 (paper back)
£ 8.95 (cloth cover)
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The final report from the education project of Plan 2000 which draws together the main conclusions from the various studies undertaken during the project, and points to six priorities for action in the future : structure, diversification of resources, regionalisation, the status of teachers, the relationship between education and employment and how best to institutionalize innovation.

Also published in French as L'EDUCATION CREATRICE

Paris, Elsevier, 1975, 192 p.
ISBN 2 8003 0122 8
FF.34.-

Also published in German as LERNEN FUR EIN NEUES JAHRUNDERT
Frankfurt, Diesterweg, 1976
ISBN 3 425 07923 9
D.M. 28.-